



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/557,617	04/25/2000	Thomas G. Woolston	11092-005002	9094

20985 7590 05/21/2003
FISH & RICHARDSON, PC
4350 LA JOLLA VILLAGE DRIVE
SUITE 500
SAN DIEGO, CA 92122

EXAMINER

SNAPP, SANDRA S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3624

DATE MAILED: 05/21/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Applicati n N .

09/557,617

Examiner

Sandra Snapp

Applicant(s)

WOOLSTON, THOMAS G.

Art Unit

3624

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 25 February 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 11-28 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 11-18 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 19-28 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 25 February 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Response to Amendment
Information Disclosure Statement

The Applicant has stated that a comprehensive IDS is being prepared in response to the Examiner's previous request for copies of the printed publications cited in the originally filed IDS. A new IDS is not necessary at this time, merely copies of the previously cited printed publications. If the Applicant will submit copies of the printed publications for review, they will be considered timely and no fee or statement will be necessary.

Drawings

The new Figure 12A drawing was received on 2-25-03 and is herein accepted.

Specification

The previously cited objections to the disclosure have been successfully overcome by the amendment.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The rejection of claims 19-21 based on 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, is herein withdrawn in view of the newly amended claims. The amendment of the specification to include support for such claims successfully overcomes the rejection.

The rejection of claims 19-21 based on 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is also withdrawn in view of the newly amended claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

Art Unit: 3624

35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Claims 19-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. The claims are directed to a system that lacks any specific technology. The Board in *Ex Parte Bowman* held that a claimed invention that is directed “merely to human making mental computations . . . is nothing more than an abstract idea which is not tied to any technological art and is not a useful art as contemplated by the Constitution.” *Ex Parte Bowman*, 61 USPQ2d 1669, 1671 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 2001) (Unpublished).

The Applicant can overcome this rejection by amending the claims to include some specific technology, such as a computer, either in the preamble or the body of the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 19-28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by the Grant et al. patent (US 4,694,397).

The Grant reference discloses a system for facilitating electronic commerce transactions comprising:

A means for interfacing a plurality of Internet users (col. 1, lines 41-55);

Art Unit: 3624

An accounts database for maintaining accounts (76);

A means for tracking account information for the plurality of Internet users (col. 8, line 44 through col. 9, line 16);

A means for returning interest on positive balances in the accounts (col. 9, lines 2-17);
and

A means for deducting from the accounts in response to accepted offers made by the Internet users (col. 9, lines 1-17);

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. The Aggarwal et al., Adams, Stannard, Donald et al., Trojan et al., Ferstenberg et al., and Griffin et al. patents are all directed to some form of online trading or auction systems.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Sandra Snapp whose telephone number is 703-305-6940. The examiner can normally be reached on Mon.-Thurs..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vincent Millin can be reached on 703-308-1065. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-7687 for regular communications and 703-305-7687 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-1113.

Application/Control Number: 09/557,617

Page 5

Art Unit: 3624

SS 

May 19, 2003



HANI M. KAZIMI
PRIMARY EXAMINER